

31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

Deputy Pat Buckley  
Dáil Éireann  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 14319/22**

**“To ask the Minister for Health if he will obtain assurances from the HSE that the Owenacurra Health Centre, Midleton, County Cork will remain open and that all pre-Covid-19 services will be retained and enhanced; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”**

Dear Deputy Buckley,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare wish to emphasise that safety is central to the provision of a quality mental health service. The original plan for the Owenacurra Centre was to refurbish the building so as to bring it to a standard that allows for the provision of care and recovery which a modern service should provide and one that matches the care being provided there. However, as we moved to the advanced planning phase for the centre, serious concerns emerged that any level of refurbishment would not bring the building up to the standards required and neither would it be regarded as fit for purpose by our Regulator.

The HSE recognizes the interdependencies of risks, e.g. the relative safety of the service user and staff is dependent on the safety of the environment in which care is delivered. Advice from building experts and our HSE estates function, informed the HSE in its difficult decision to close the centre, given the unacceptable deficiencies in the existing accommodation and the investment of significant funding into a building which would still not bring the unit up to an acceptable accommodation standard for residents.

The priority for the service remains the welfare of the remaining 11 remaining residents of the centre. We continue to work with each resident individually and consult with their families to agree an appropriate alternative placement based on their assessed needs and their will and preference. Residents continue to move on a phased basis and the work with each resident is on-going. Once this transition is completed, Owenacurra Centre will be closed as a residential setting. I can confirm that the current site of the Centre will be used in the future for Mental Health Services. The HSE will engage with local the Authority and housing bodies to progress its future use as a supported living model for people with mental health needs in the community.

It is also important to note that a commitment to source a community house in Midleton town was made to facilitate any resident of Owenacurra that may be suitable for this facility or any service user in East Cork. The model for this service would be rehabilitation focussed with visiting

healthcare professional staff supporting the residents. In addition we have provided assurances that we will explore options to relocate and reinstate the day service in the town as soon as possible.

I trust the above clarifies the queries raised.

Kind Regards,



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**Mr Kevin Morrison**  
**A/Head of Mental Health Services**  
**Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**